

EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED METHOD
OF TEACHING SPELLING

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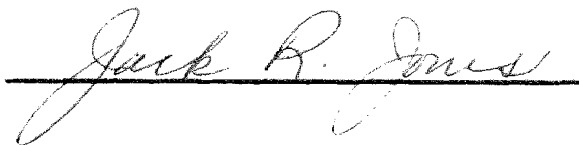
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the language arts so often slighted in the schoolroom today is the teaching of spelling. Very few changes have been made through the years in the teaching of spelling. However, research has been carried on by recognized scholars to see whether the spelling program could be improved. It is the writer's belief, substantiated by Paul and Jean Hanna, that:

The teaching of spelling has proved to be a rather frustrating experience for more than a few teachers and most pupils. Yet the elementary school teacher knows that if pupils are to develop the ability to communicate adequately in written language and if they are to be adjudged worthy of association with or employment by others, he must teach spelling as well as he can. He cannot abdicate his responsibility in this matter; he must plan carefully.¹

Spelling then is a complicated process and involves many skills that should not be slighted. The teacher should be concerned about the subject and build spelling power in her pupils to the best of her ability.

Statement of the problem. Much has been said about individualizing instruction, and at the present time there are several individualized spelling programs available to

¹Paul R. and Jean S. Hanna, "The Teaching of Spelling," The National Elementary Principal, XLV (November, 1965), 23-24.

help meet each student's need. Research has been carried on by recognized scholars to see whether individualization is the answer. The problem of this study was to investigate whether an individualized spelling program could improve the spelling of fourth grade students at Audubon, Iowa, and what merit such a program might have with fourth grade pupils.

The children involved in the study. The children involved in the study were all of the fourth grade children in the Audubon Elementary School, at Audubon, Iowa. They were divided into three rooms. One of the three rooms used an individualized spelling method, and the other two rooms used the spelling book, My Word Book.¹

The Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test was given to these children in 1966 and it was this score the writer used to determine the mental maturity of the children and the groupings they were divided into. The results of this test showed that the children's intelligent quotient ranged from 136 to 80.

Limitations of the study. This study was limited to one individualized spelling program, Spelling - Individu-

¹Don C. Rogers, Lorrene Love Ort, and Mary C. Serra, My Word Book (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1966).

alized Program.¹ The children using this program were limited by the selection of words this program contained.

The three rooms involved in the study had three different teachers, a factor which makes the teacher variable as another limiting factor.

Testing could be considered another limiting factor, since only one test, The Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test, was used to determine the child's mental maturity and only one test, The Metropolitan Achievement Tests, in two forms was used to determine the child's spelling achievement.

Procedure used in the study. The three rooms of children involved in the study had been previously divided heterogeneously. The writer used the individualized method of spelling in her room while the other two rooms used the spelling book, My Word Book.² The writer, with her group of children, explained carefully what individualized spelling was and how the program would be carried out. One of the most crucial elements in an individual's spelling program is his attitude toward spelling. The values of correct spelling were discussed and the part attitude plays in spelling

¹J. Burdett Johnson and Willard G. Jones, Individualized Spelling Program (Laramie: University of Wyoming, College of Education, 1964).

²Rogers, Ort, and Serra, loc. cit.

progress. Dolch said:

If children are taught how to learn to spell they will learn spelling in all their school subjects and in their life work outside of school. This must be done by teaching right attitudes and good habits in learning spelling. Once this is learned it will function in school and out, in high school, college, business, and wherever words are dealt with.¹

Accompanying this discussion, as an integral part of the program, was a discussion on individual differences. The student study plan was gone over until each student understood the spelling program thoroughly.

In October, 1966, when all the children were well adjusted in school, the entire group of fourth graders were tested with Form A of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Test 4, Spelling; a forty item test in which each word was dictated orally by the examiner. In May, 1967, the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Form B, was given to determine all three rooms class gains which might have occurred during the seven month period. These tests were scored and the results tabulated. It was from these tests a comparison was made to test the effectiveness of the individualized spelling program. A discussion of the findings will be found in Chapter III.

Aim of individualized spelling instruction. It is the aim of this individualized spelling program to meet the

¹Edward William Dolch, Better Spelling (Champaign, Illinois: Garrard Press, 1942), p. 16.

needs of a group of children with a vast array of physical differences, attitudes, and mental differences; and to take each child where he is in his spelling development and let him progress as rapidly as he is able to master new material. It is hoped this program can be flexible enough to take advantage of growth spurts, individual differences among students, teachers and environment. Its prime objective is to allow each student to progress as rapidly as he can achieve proficiency.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To improve the quality of education it is necessary for teachers to familiarize themselves with new programs, read current material on the subject, and try the new program if it has something to offer.

It is the purpose of this chapter to review the literature written about Spelling and to pay particular attention to what has been written on Individualized Spelling and what is currently being written.

The Casis faculty has said this about Spelling, "By its nature as a tool for written language, spelling is one part of the curriculum that can be measured with great objectivity and a high degree of accuracy."¹

Present status of spelling instruction. The chief aim of spelling instruction is to teach children to spell correctly the words he needs in writing. Scanlan expressed it this way:

The goal of a good spelling program is basically, facility in written expression. Children do not lack for ideas but their efforts to express them may be frustrated by their inability to spell correctly.²

¹Casis School, Spelling Instruction (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas, 1954), p. 143.

²James Scanlan, "Spelling with a Change of Pace," The Instructor, LXXV (October, 1965), 95.

The more words a child can spell then will make a larger writing vocabulary and better stories he will be able to create. Personke and Yee said, "Fluency in writing is almost dependent upon a large store of words which can be written without thinking."¹ We know it is important for a child to learn to spell the next thing is from what method will a child learn best. Yee firmly believed the choice and use of spellers was the center of controversy when he said:

An enduring and sometimes confusing controversy involving leading authorities in spelling continues today. Most school leaders and teachers have been unaware of this prolonged debate and do not realize that the issues of concern involve them most significantly. Elementary school teachers and their classes have been involved in the debate insofar as their choice and use of spellers and particular methods of instruction may be concerned.²

The two problems involved in the mastery of spelling is; one, the choice of words to be taught and two, the methods of teaching and learning the words after they have been selected. The greatest share of this responsibility lies on the shoulder of the teacher. Often times the selection of a textbook is made by a committee of teachers so it is not the sole responsibility of one teacher. The word lists are properly selected and correctly graded on differ-

¹Carl Personke and Albert H. Yee, "A Model for the Analysis of Spelling Behavior," Elementary English, XLIII (March, 1966), 283.

²Albert H. Yee, "The Generalization Controversy on Spelling Instruction," Elementary English, XLIII (February, 1966), 154.

ent levels for the children by the author or authors of the textbook. Reid, when he evaluated five methods of teaching spelling in second and third grades, said:

There is controversy among educators over placing emphasis on direct, systematic spelling instruction versus what might be called a more functional incidental approach. Many school systems employ a compromise between the two extremes, but wide individual differences exist among teachers in applying locally recommended spelling methods.¹

The teacher is the prime factor in any spelling program. The interest and enthusiasm that she creates may motivate and stimulate the children and do far more for the children than any program could hope to.

Spelling texts have done little toward meeting individual differences in the classroom. Keener in his report presented to the Spelling Committee of the 1926 Yearbook stated, "If a pupil can spell eighty words out of a given list of one hundred words it seems folly to have him spend time on the entire one hundred."² Yet today spelling books in our schools give one list of words to all the students in any given room, and usually one week is spent studying the list. Tidyman and Butterfield said:

¹Hale C. Reid, "Evaluating Five Methods of Teaching Spelling - Second and Third Grades," The Instructor, LXXVI (March, 1966), 77.

²E. E. Keener, "Individual Method vs. Group Method of Teaching Spelling," Department of Superintendence Fourth Yearbook, Washington, D. C., (February, 1926), 128.

In spite of these well established facts, we commonly continue to require all children in a grade to use the same book. It would seem logical to adjust books to ability in spelling, as we do in reading.¹

No provision is made for individual differences. Hildreth too, thinks the plan indefensible when she said:

The assignment of a uniform word list to an entire ungrouped class is indefensible because this practice is inconsistent with known facts about individual differences in the learning capacities and needs of typical children. When any uniform word list is prescribed, some of the children can already spell all the words, a few can spell some of them, and the rest have varying degrees of success with the list. Preassigning all the words for an entire school year makes spelling a perfunctory exercise having little relation to children's life needs. Undifferentiated assignments work a hardship on the slow learner, who needs more repetition of simpler words.²

Dawson and Dingee said this about individual differences:

A minimum of provision for individual differences is the practice of cutting down the weekly list for the slower learners so that they study fewer words, those that are relatively important and simple. This is good as far as it goes but it does not go far enough.³

With little or no provision made for individual differences it would seem timely to see whether an individual type spelling might be a solution. Paul and Jean Hanna agree

¹Willard F. Tidyman and Marguerite Butterfield, Teaching the Language Arts (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1951), p. 348.

²Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Spelling (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955), pp. 11-12.

³Mildred A. Dawson and Frieda Hayes Dingee, Children Learn the Language Arts (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Burgess Publishing Company, 1959), p. 33.

with the writer when they said:

From the early days of this century until the decade of the 1950's the techniques of learning to spell had seen little improvement. It is true that Thorndike, Horn, Gates, Dolch, McKee, Rinsland, and others did research to discover which words people used most frequently in their written vocabulary, and which words seemed to be misspelled most often.¹

With little improvement made and little or no provision for individual differences the writer feels justified spending time on this field report.

Hildreth said:

Provision must be made for individualization of instruction as well as for systematic drill. . . . Spelling instruction should be individualized, and grouping of pupils is one method of doing this.²

Individualized instruction gives the children training in self direction as well as co-operation. Foran had this to say:

Any method of instruction which makes the child wholly dependent on the teacher, upon assistance from others, inevitably dooms him to disappointment and failure when such assistance is no longer forthcoming. It must be the aim of instruction to develop self-reliance of the proper type, not arrogant independence, but the ability to work out one's own problems by intelligent, voluntary, and sustained application. . . . Such habits of self reliance can be developed by providing children with means of studying words by themselves with only such assistance from the teacher as will enable them to surmount the obstacles which defeat honest effort. As the assistance is gradually withdrawn and is replaced by habits of

¹Paul R. and Jean S. Hanna, "Spelling Today," The Instructor, LXX (November, 1960), 6.

²Hildreth, op. cit., p. 191.

independent study, the child is being prepared not only to meet such later difficulties as he may encounter in spelling but, in a way, to face every difficulty that will confront him in the days to come.¹

Paul and Jean Hanna stated that spelling today can be improved with a new approach and they conclude with four important points:

1. False conceptions of the nature of the spelling of the English language, and mediocre rote methods of learning to spell have thwarted progress for fifty years.
2. New research now emphasizes that eighty per cent of all phonemes in a basic 3,000 word writing vocabulary are consistently spelled.
3. New insights into the psychology of spelling give us a brighter outlook for the future.
4. A phonemic analysis of words and an inductive study of the letter symbols used to spell the sounds in words, provide a firm base for the spelling program.²

It is important to note that the individualized spelling program uses the basic 3,000 word writing vocabulary that is consistently spelled.

Experimenting has been done on individualized spelling as early as 1926 and it was Keener that said in his report to the Spelling Committee:

1. When all grades are combined, individual instruction is slightly superior to group instruction. This is true even though teachers are more skilled in using the group method. . . .

¹Thomas George Foran, The Psychology and Teaching of Spelling (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic Education Press, 1934), p. 5.

²Hanna, op. cit., p. 106.

4. When comparison is made using only classes where one teacher taught the two methods, the individual method still seems slightly superior.
5. The testimony of the majority of teachers at the end of the experiment was very markedly in favor of the individual method. Even though many of them had not had previous experience with it they favored it because of the greater interest on the part of the pupils, economy of pupils' time, and opportunity of giving help where it was needed. . .
8. Further experimentation should be conducted to determine the best procedure to follow in each of the school grades. Perhaps a combination of the group and individual instruction, it is possible that a short period of preliminary study before the initial test would be valuable. At least there is a need for devising some effective scheme for helping pupils to acquire a proper technique of study.¹

More recent experiments and recommendations have been made on individualized spelling and it was Dolch that said this about individual spelling lists:

Individual Spelling Lists. It is often held that the most practical solution of the spelling problem is for each pupil to keep a record of his own individual spelling errors. Here is another possible method for supplementing the minimum list for all. There are three important arguments for the use of individual lists; the first is that different individuals make mistakes on different words. In the making of a local list, we have noted the problem of determining how many mistakes must be made on a word before we decide to teach that word to all children. The individual list settles the question by having each study his own mistakes. Therefore, no mistakes are neglected. The second important value of the individual list is interest. Each child will want to learn how to spell those words which he himself gets wrong. Arousing interest in spelling has been one of our great difficulties. Some believe that lack of interest is

¹ E. E. Keener, "Individual Method vs. Group Method of Teaching Spelling," Report Presented to the Spelling Committee of the 1926 Yearbook, Department of Superintendence Fourth Yearbook (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1926), 128.

the chief cause of failure in spelling. The individual lists should solve the interest problem. Third, there is an important saving of time. In all other methods many of the children are perhaps spending a good part of their time studying words which they do not need to study. The individual list seeks to settle the whole question by letting each child work only on his own errors.¹

Hildreth has told one of the chief problems in individualized spelling but she too favors the plan when she said:

Teachers who have tried similar plans in the upper grades report that pupil growth is far superior to that obtained with formal teaching; but they find that training the pupils to work independently or with partners is the chief problem.²

Another success story on individualized spelling has been given by Ham when she said:

I have noticed the greatest improvement in the students who continually met with failure before. Here they meet with success. The progress is slow, but at least there is progress. The morale is high and the attitude is positive. The program is very flexible and adaptations to individual differences can be readily made. Each child works at his own pace on words best suited to him. Frustration is almost nonexistent. Since many are working on different lists the slow learner is not singled out.³

Success has come for individualized spelling. An Individualized Spelling Program gives training in self-direction and makes it possible for co-operation among the students.

¹Dolch, loc. cit.

²Hildreth, op. cit., p. 183.

³Jane Finley Ham, "Success Story: Individualized Spelling," The Instructor, LXXV (September, 1965), 171.

Children develop independence because of it and show an interest in the program. It economizes time on both the part of the pupils and teacher.

Other factors to be considered in an effective spelling program. Today's teacher must consider not only the spelling program but the children who are to be taught. She must know their needs and their potentials as well as whatever experiences they have already had that may have helped prepare them for or inhibit them from learning to spell.

Paul and Jean Hanna said about today's children:

Today, more and more pre-school children are discovering the delight of using letters to write the words they speak and, upon entering first grade, are already in command of a sizeable volume of words they can write (spell) correctly.¹

Not one factor but many compromise a child's background. To build a background Paul and Jean Hanna said:

Spelling for most pupils is a much more complicated process; one that involves the analysis of not only the sounds and their letter representations but the position of the phoneme in the word, the stress of the syllable, and various other factors that influence the choice among options of the particular grapheme to be used. . . . Building spelling power depends to a large extent (but not exclusively) upon a careful, rational, mature examination of all elements of a phonological analysis of words, or an ability to generalize about the effects that position, stress and constraint have on the choices one makes among alternative graphemes or sets of graphemes to con-

¹Paul R. and Jean S. Hanna, "The Teaching of Spelling," The National Elementary Principal, XLV (November, 1965), 25.

form to standard American-English spelling.¹

Another factor related by Dolch has said, "Each child learns by his own efforts, but he must be taught how to direct those efforts, that is, how to study."² Foran agreed when he said, "Persons cannot learn spelling against their will regardless of the method of instruction that is employed."³ No child will direct their effort if they are not interested. It is Ham that said:

There are many areas to consider in evaluating a spelling program. One of the most important is attitude toward the subject. This can be measured by the enthusiasm and interest shown in class sessions. The children enjoy working in pairs and they stimulate each other. The rate of progress demonstrated by the number of lessons completed, is another indication of positive attitude.⁴

Scanlan thought attitude might have some connection with a change of pace and he said:

However, both pupils and teacher occasionally welcome a change of pace in connection with the testing program and the rote learning required for mastery of a spelling vocabulary. This is where the imaginative use of spelling "games" with their many variations, helps to provide variety and stimulate the students to greater efforts.⁵

Any program that will enable a child to feel success will motivate the child to greater successes and with each expe-

¹Ibid., pp. 20-23.

²Dolch, op. cit., p. 170.

³Foran, op. cit., p. 221.

⁴Jane Finley Ham, "Success Story: Individualized Spelling," The Instructor, LXXV (September, 1965), 171.

⁵Scanlan, loc. cit.

rience more is learned. Any child that writes, needs spelling and spelling leads him on to more learning activities.

Fitzgerald said:

The child in using words to express his thoughts will integrate the process of generalizing, studying word forms, building words, using the dictionary and learning meanings in writing.¹

To conclude, Chapter II has been devoted to a review of the literature written about spelling with a particular emphasis on Individualized Spelling. This chapter told the aim of spelling instruction and the problems involved. The key to any spelling program is the teacher and the method she provides in putting across her program. Only the teacher can make provision for individual differences. Other factors to be considered that were mentioned were: the children themselves, their efforts, attitudes and interests.

¹James A. Fitzgerald, The Teaching of Spelling (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1951), p. 31.

CHAPTER III

REPORT OF THE STUDY

The Individualized Spelling Program used in the writer's fourth grade room at Audubon, Iowa, will be described in this chapter. The content and grouping of words, the teaching and learning activities, the standardized tests, the comparison of scores, and the presentation of findings will be explained. Three tables are presented to analyze the data based on the two forms of the test scores and an evaluation of what the data show will be shown by a comparison of the three rooms on the fourth table. The fifth table will show the number of words studied by each child in the Individualized Spelling Program. Pupil and teacher reaction will also be presented in Chapter III.

Content and grouping of words used in the experiment.

The Individualized Spelling Program was obtained from the Laboratory School, College of Education at the University of Wyoming. The sixth grade at the University School, University of Wyoming, was engaged in the development of the individualized method of studying spelling during the 1962-63 school year. It had been under investigation by its writers for seven years. The source of words for this particular program was obtained by analyzing words on the basis of frequency of occurrence in writing. They had been checked

against Hildreth's groupings of Rinsland's study of six million running words taken from children's themes, examinations, letters, and other forms of written expression. Gertrude Hildreth organized approximately 3,000 of Rinsland's most frequently used words in six levels according to usability. Added to these six levels are levels seven, eight and nine which were obtained from Brigham Young University Laboratory School and reported to be the advanced levels of Hildreth's groupings of Rinsland's study. Additional words were taken from, "Hard Spots in Hard Words for the Secondary School Students." This is a publication prepared by Dr. Edna J. Furness and Gertrude A. Boyd and published for the Wyoming School Study Council by the Curriculum and Research Center in the College of Education at the University of Wyoming. The words are grouped according to frequency of occurrence. Each gradation of words is arranged in groupings according to structural and phonetic generalizations.

The words in the Individualized Spelling Program have been grouped according to usability and spelling difficulty, with sub-grouping giving special attention to phonetic clues, structural analysis clues, and spelling similarities.

Short a as in cat

Short e as in let

Short o as in hot

Short i as in did

Short u as in but

Long a as in say

Long e as in be

Long i as in five

Long o as in go

Long u as in use

Long i as in buy

The ar as in barn

Other sounds of letter a

The ir as in bird

The or as in order

Other sounds of letter o

The ur as in hurt

The oo

The ou and ow

The oi and oy

The ew

The aw

The silent k

The qu

The er as in danger

When two vowels come together, often the first vowel
says its name and the second is silent.

For single syllable words ending in e, often the first vowel says its name and the final e is silent.

Contractions and possessives

Capitals and abbreviations

Compound words

Polysyllabic words

Memory words

Teaching and learning activities used in the Study.

The materials used to implement the Individualized Spelling Program were:

Teacher's manual, Individualized Spelling Program.

Spelling kit containing the word lists.

Six, five and one half by eight and one half card file boxes.

Theme paper.

Scratch paper.

Notebook for each student.

A ditto box top or facsimile.

Stapler.

To describe the Individualized Spelling Program from the beginning, the writer took the five copies of each spelling list and placed them according to level (beginning with list one, level one and continuing through level twelve) in the file boxes at the front of the room where

they were readily accessible to all pupils. List dividers were provided for the convenience of locating a desired list. The name of each level was printed on the top of each list protruding slightly above the lists to facilitate easy location of the desired list. A mimeographed copy of the Student Study Plan and Student Progress Record was made for each student and given to them to be placed in their notebook.¹

One of the most crucial elements in an individual's spelling program was his attitude toward spelling. His daily performance in class reflected this attitude. It could not be assumed that all students can see the optimum value in spelling correctly and using good practices of word selection in writing. It, therefore, became necessary to discuss the values of correct spelling and the part attitude plays in spelling progress. Accompanying this discussion, as an integral part of the program, was a discussion on individual differences. The student study plan was explained carefully by going through each step pointing out the "whys" and "values" of the program. This was done over and over until each student understood the spelling program thoroughly.

The student study plan that was followed is given below with comments in parentheses:

¹See Appendix.

1. Select a spelling partner. (The procedure for the selection of a partner was discussed with the students. It was determined how long two people should work together before changing partners and what to do in case one partner was absent. Four weeks was usually a sufficient length of time for two people to work together before changing partners.)
2. Select a place to study. (Desks were arranged with spelling partners sitting by each other.)
3. Begin at spelling level determined by Diagnostic Spelling Placement Test.¹
4. Take word list from spelling boxes.
5. Take a pre-test on left side of spelling notebook.
(The student giving the test should pronounce each word carefully, use it in a sentence, and repeat the word again. If he has difficulty, the student should check with the teacher. Usually, beginning at level eight, each student is expected to write a definition for each word. The level may vary depending on the teacher.)
6. With partner, correct pre-test, and on the right side of spelling notebook write correct spelling for all words misspelled. Be accurate. (Begin-

¹See Appendix.

ning with level eight, all students were expected to look up in a dictionary definitions they missed on the pre-test and write them in their notebook. They were required to know these definitions, thereby creating usability in writing and speech.)

7. Practice each word misspelled on scratch paper at least three times--more if necessary. (Various methods of studying words were presented to the pupils. The values of each method was discussed.)
8. Have your partner give you a test on your misspelled words. Correct test with partner. (Partner should give word in sentence if necessary. Student takes test on scratch paper.)
9. Practice and re-test if necessary.
10. Mark your progress record.
11. Turn in practice test and re-test, if necessary, for recording. (The test and re-test was taken on the same piece of paper. The practice test and re-test was stapled by the student and placed in a box to be recorded at the teacher's convenience. A record sheet was used by the teacher to plot the student's progress. It was used in parent-teacher conferences and teacher-student conferences.)
12. Take new list and proceed through study plan again.
13. Take "retention test". (This test was prepared in

advance by selecting words from a level. When the last list on any level was completed, the pupil reviews. This was done by going through his notebook. Two different forms of this test were used interchangeably.)

Two students were selected by the teacher to give retention tests. They were spelling partners. They gave and corrected retention tests. The retention test was brought to the teacher by the tester for recording and consultation with the tested. A special place in the room was set aside for giving retention tests. Care was taken to select persons who could pronounce words clearly and correctly.

About every six weeks new people were selected to give retention tests. In some cases, it was advisable for the teacher to give retention tests.

If a student's performance fell below 90 per cent he repeated the level. This was done by asking the student to take a pre-test on all the words in the level. He then studied the words misspelled and took the retention test again. He was given a different form than the one used the first time. (Students who approached the passing level 85 - 89 per cent) were allowed to review from their notebook then take the retention test again.)

The Diagnostic Spelling Placement Tests¹ were given after a group discussion had been conducted with the students. It was at this point the writer hoped they understood the program thoroughly and especially the values included in it for each individual student.

All students took the Diagnostic Spelling Placement Test starting with level one. The writer pronounced each word carefully, used it in a sentence, and repeated the word again. After all the words in level one had been given, the writer checked the tests. When any pupil missed more words than was indicated at the bottom of each diagnostic spelling test level, he began working on that level, starting with the first list in the spelling boxes. Level two Diagnostic Placement Test was given using the same procedure as indicated for level one and so on until all students found their spelling level. This took several class periods. The students read quietly or worked on some other classroom activity until all students had completed the Diagnostic Spelling Placement Tests.

All pupils were now ready to begin their actual work. Since attitude played such an important part in the success of the program, the values inherent in an individualized spelling program were discussed briefly again. It was pointed out to the student that he was responsible for his

¹See index.

own progress. The Student Study Plan and the Student Progress Record was passed out to the students. The Student Study Plan was glued in the front of the Student's spelling notebook. The Student Progress Record was glued in the back of the student's notebook. The Student Study Plan was discussed again and any steps that the pupils did not understand were explained. The procedure used in marking the Student Progress Record was gone over. When all questions were satisfactorily answered, the pupils began their work.

Whenever a spelling problem was of sufficient magnitude to merit consideration by the entire group or a small group, a discussion was conducted. Following the discussion each student returned to his individualized spelling.

When a writing exercise was corrected the words spelled incorrectly were marked. It was found that many of these errors were due to carelessness. When the student was confronted with the mistake, he promptly spelled the word correctly. If the student did not know the word he then added it to his own individualized spelling list and was studied in the same manner as the other words. Using the dictionary on an individual basis was encouraged.

During "open house" in the fall this plan was explained and discussed with the parents. Favorable reactions to it were noted. Emphasis was given to the role they could play in further facilitating the spelling progress of their children.

Standardized tests used. The Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test had been given to the children in this study in 1966. It was this score that was averaged to find the mean intelligent quotient score of each of the fourth grade rooms.

The Metropolitan Achievement Test, Form A was given in October, 1966, to the children in this study. In May, 1967, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Form B, was given to the same group of children to determine the gain made by each child during the seven month period.

Presentation of findings. Table I shows the intelligent quotients, the scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test in spelling given in October, 1966, and again in May, 1967, and the individual gains of one fourth grade class at Audubon, Iowa, taught by the Spelling Text. The mean intelligent quotient of this room was 113. The range in intelligence quotients was from 80 to 136. The perfect spelling score on the Metropolitan Achievement Test in Spelling was forty. In October no one made a perfect score but the range was from nine to thirty-nine. In May, the range was from twenty-one to forty. There were some that made no gain from October, 1966, to May, 1967. The range of gains was from zero to thirteen words. Giving a mean individual gain of 6.11 words for one room using the spelling text.

TABLE I

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS, SCORES ON METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST IN SPELLING, OCTOBER, 1966, AND MAY, 1967, AND GAINS
IN ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF ONE FOURTH GRADE CLASS,
AUDUBON, IOWA, SCHOOLS, TAUGHT BY SPELLING TEXT

Child by Number	I.Q.	October Raw Score	May Raw Score	Individual Gains
1	136	39	40	1
2	136	39	39	0
3	134	24	27	3
4	129	32	38	6
5	128	28	30	2
6	126	33	40	7
7	122	29	34	5
8	121	33	38	5
9	121	39	39	0
10	119	30	32	2
11	116	9	21	12
12	116	36	40	4
13	115	30	37	7
14	115	25	29	4
15	115	39	40	1
16	112	34	38	4
17	112	31	36	5
18	111	17	27	10
19	110	22	31	9
20	109	24	32	8
21	107	26	32	6
22	102	29	35	6
23	100	21	31	10
24	99	15	28	13
25	96	14	26	12
26	87	23	35	12
27	80	12	23	11
Total	3074	733	898	165
Mean	113.85	27.15	33.26	6.11

Table II shows the second fourth grade class using the spelling text and their intelligent quotient scores of the October and May test and individual gains. The range of intelligent quotients for this room was from 87 to 130, with a mean intelligence quotient of 110. The scores in October ranged from fourteen to thirty-nine. In May the range of scores was from twenty-six to forty. The range of individual gains was from zero to sixteen giving this room an individual mean gain of 6.29 words.

Table III shows the room of fourth grade children using the Individualized Spelling Program. This room was taught by the writer and shows the range of intelligent quotients from 90 to 128 with a mean intelligent quotient of 111. In October the range was from twenty-three to forty. The range of individual gains was from one to twenty-two showing a mean individual gain of 7.00 words.

It is interesting to note by comparing the first three tables that all the children in the room, using the Individualized Spelling Program, made some gain while in the other two rooms there were two children in room one and three children in the second room that made no gain.

TABLE II

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS, SCORES ON METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST IN SPELLING, OCTOBER, 1966, AND MAY, 1967, AND GAINS
IN ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF SECOND FOURTH GRADE CLASS,
AUDUBON, IOWA, SCHOOLS, TAUGHT BY SPELLING TEXT

Child by Number	I.Q.	October Raw Score	May Raw Score	Individual Gains
1	130	37	39	2
2	128	35	40	5
3	127	38	39	1
4	123	22	29	7
5	122	15	31	16
6	122	17	33	16
7	121	37	39	2
8	116	33	37	4
9	115	27	35	8
10	112	34	38	4
11	112	29	36	7
12	109	34	37	3
13	107	16	30	14
14	106	37	39	2
15	106	38	38	0
16	105	38	38	0
17	105	14	30	16
18	105	20	26	6
19	102	39	39	0
20	98	19	35	16
21	97	19	30	11
22	94	31	35	4
23	92	33	36	3
24	87	30	34	4
Total	2641	692	843	151
Mean	110.04	28.83	35.13	6.29

TABLE III

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS, SCORES ON METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST IN SPELLING, OCTOBER, 1966, AND MAY, 1967, AND GAINS
IN ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF THIRD FOURTH GRADE CLASS,
AUDUBON, IOWA, SCHOOLS, TAUGHT BY INDIVIDUALIZED
SPELLING

Child by Number	I.Q.	October Raw Score	May Raw Score	Individual Gains
1	128	39	40	1
2	126	35	38	3
3	126	35	39	4
4	125	35	38	3
5	124	34	39	5
6	122	37	40	3
7	120	14	36	22
8	119	18	28	10
9	118	39	40	1
10	116	38	39	1
11	114	32	36	4
12	112	38	40	2
13	111	27	35	8
14	111	7	23	16
15	110	32	37	5
16	110	36	39	3
17	108	29	37	8
18	107	36	39	3
19	107	27	35	8
20	107	18	30	12
21	105	36	40	4
22	105	24	36	12
23	103	23	30	7
24	102	15	28	13
25	98	20	27	7
26	95	31	34	3
27	94	9	25	16
28	90	14	26	12
Total	3113	778	974	196
Mean	111.18	27.79	34.79	7.00

Table IV shows a comparison of the three rooms mean intelligence quotients, mean scores on Metropolitan Achievement Test in Spelling given in October, 1966, and May, 1967 and mean gains in achievement scores. Room I is one room taught by the spelling text, and Room III is the room taught by the Individualized Spelling Program. This table shows that Room I has the highest intelligence quotient with the experimental group or Room III second highest and Room II being one point lower than Room III. The score made on the October test was all very close with Room II scoring one word higher than the other two. The same is true of the May score. The mean gain for Room I was 6.11 words. The mean gain for Room II was 6.29 words while the greatest gain was in Room III and that was a mean gain of 7.00 words. This is an indication that the room using the Individualized Spelling Program was slightly superior to the other two rooms using the spelling text.

Table V shows the level each child in the individualized spelling room started on and the level they finished on. The range of words the children studied during the year individually was from 489 to 4,772. This gave a range of 13 to 132 number of words studied individually per week. The average number of words studied per week by each child was sixty.

TABLE IV

MEAN INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS, MEAN SCORES ON METROPOLITAN
ACHIEVEMENT TEST IN SPELLING, OCTOBER, 1966, AND MAY,
1967, AND MEAN GAINS IN ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF ALL
THREE FOURTH GRADE CLASSES, AUDUBON, IOWA,
SCHOOLS

Room by Number	Mean I.Q.	Mean October Score	Mean May Score	Mean Gain
I	113.85	27.15	33.26	6.11
II	110.04	28.83	35.13	6.29
III	111.18	27.79	34.79	7.00

TABLE V

THE INDIVIDUALIZED SPELLING PROGRAM CHILDREN'S STARTING
LEVEL, FINISHING LEVEL, NUMBER OF WORDS STUDIED IN
THE PROGRAM, AND AVERAGE WORDS STUDIED PER WEEK

Child by Number	Starting Level	Finishing Level	Number of Words Studied	Number of Words Studied Per Week
1	3	9	4,121	113
2	1	6B	3,197	88
3	2	6B	3,498	97
4	2	5	2,784	77
5	2	6B	3,208	89
6	2	7	3,786	105
7	1	4	2,097	58
8	1	3	1,134	31
9	3	6B	2,616	72
10	3	6B	2,823	78
11	1	4	1,678	46
12	4	9	3,209	89
13	3	4	1,349	37
14	1	2	1,085	30
15	1	5	2,277	63
16	2	7	3,730	103
17	1	6A	2,883	80
18	2	9	4,772	132
19	2	3	489	13
20	1	3	621	17
21	2	6A	3,208	89
22	2	4	1,259	34
23	1	2	621	17
24	1	3	1,134	31
25	1	4	2,077	57
26	2	3	621	17
27	1	2	621	17
28	1	2	624	17
Total			61,522	1697
Average Words Per Week				60

Pupil and teacher reaction. In evaluating the Individualized Spelling Program used in this study, it was thought the pupil and teacher reaction might be important in indicating the effectiveness of the individualized method.

At the end of the year the children were asked by the teacher to write a short paragraph telling how they felt about the individualized spelling program they had used during the year. It was at this point the teacher explained to the students that it made no difference to her or to their grade and she wanted an honest evaluation of whether they preferred to use this program next year or if they preferred going back to the spelling text they had previously used.

All children in the room reacted favorably to the program and indicated they preferred the Individualized Spelling Program over the Spelling text.

As for the teacher reaction, it, too, was favorable and one of the reasons was because it economized time on both her part and the pupils. It was from teacher observation during the year this program was used that these findings were observed:

1. The Individualized Spelling Program gives training in self-direction.
2. The Program made it possible for cooperation among the students.

3. The Program helped the children develop independence and because of it show an interest in the program.

This program did an excellent job of meeting individual needs and it gave the teacher free time to work with the pupils individually.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An Individualized Spelling Program was used during the 1966-67 school year with a fourth grade room of children at Audubon, Iowa. It was the purpose of this study to use this program with fourth graders to see whether it was effective and what its merits might be. There were three fourth grade rooms at Audubon, Iowa, and only one room used the Individualized Spelling Program while the other two used the Spelling Text. The other two rooms had definite lists of words set up for a class where all pupils worked on a common list. The difference in the two methods were in large part differences in relative emphasis on class and individual work.

The children using the Individualized Spelling Program were all given Diagnostic Placement Tests to determine their level of spelling. Once their level of spelling was determined they:

1. Selected a partner
2. Selected a place to study
3. Took their word list from the spelling file box
4. Took a pre-test
5. Corrected the pre-test with their partner
6. Practiced and studied the words they missed

7. Took a re-test over the words they missed
8. Practiced and re-tested again if necessary
9. Marked their progress record
10. Helped their partner through the same procedure
11. Took a new list and started through the study plan again.

This procedure was followed throughout the year with the children using the Individualized Spelling Program.

In order to secure objective data all three rooms were tested with the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Form A, in October, 1966, and again in May, 1967, with the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Form B. These tests were used to determine class gains in achievement scores which occurred during this seven month period.

It is from the comparison of these scores the writer has drawn her conclusions of this study. From the findings of this study it seems possible to conclude that:

1. All children using the Individualized Spelling Program made some growth.
2. The mean individual gain was slightly higher in the individualized spelling room.
3. The children in the Individualized Spelling Room learned an average of sixty words per week.
4. The Individualized Spelling Program was an effective method of teaching spelling.

To conclude, the writer feels the Individualized Spelling Program was slightly superior to the other two rooms using the spelling text.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

STUDENT STUDY PLAN

1. Begin at spelling level determined by Diagnostic Spelling Placement Test.
2. Take word list from spelling boxes.
3. Take a pre-test on left side of spelling notebook.
4. With partner correct pre-test, and on the right side of spelling notebook write correct spelling for all words misspelled. Be Accurate!
5. Practice each word misspelled on scratch paper at least three times - more if necessary.
6. Have your partner give you a test on your misspelled words. Correct test with partner.
7. Practice and re-test if necessary.
8. Mark your progress record.
9. Turn in practice, test and re-test - if necessary - for recording.
10. Take new list and proceed through study plan again.

RETENTION TEST

When you have completed the last list on any level, review.
When you are ready, ask the teacher if you may take the Retention Test.

STUDENT PROGRESS RECORD

Shade square to show progress

R. T. - Retention Test

[illegible]

APPENDIX C

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 1	Level 2
1. ran 2. very 3. in 4. got 5. fun 6. played 7. find 8. snow 9. that 10. then 11. sister 12. place 13. while 14. home 15. ball 16. father 17. first 18. today 19. found 20. you 21. boy 22. the 23. sure 24. thought 25. their	1. hat 2. set 3. hit 4. hot 5. jump 6. lake 7. evening 8. died 9. own 10. story 11. wagon 12. ever 13. window 14. dishes 15. six 16. such 17. same 18. seen 19. eating 20. meat 21. iron 22. trying 23. open 24. part 25. fast 26. call 27. watch 28. done 29. corn 30. books 31. houses 32. that's 33. Friday 34. sometimes 35. vacation 36. beautiful 37. full 38. bought 39. working 40. eyes
Pupils misspelling more than 2 words begin with level 1.	Pupils misspelling more than 3 words begin with level 2.

APPENDIX D

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 3		Level 4	
1. cats	24. master	1. rang	24. joy
2. gas	25. parents	2. sack	25. square
3. hen	26. draw	3. steps	26. feast
4. pig	27. won	4. mill	27. reason
5. sitting	28. month	5. wished	28. sleeping
6. rich	29. words	6. block	29. goat
7. rock	30. south	7. ducks	30. main
8. age	31. news	8. below	31. rose
9. late	32. ear	9. tiny	32. base
10. wife	33. reached	10. folks	33. tribes
11. sold	34. need	11. hoping	34. plane
12. animal	35. waiting	12. cabin	35. twice
13. lessons	36. teacher's	13. sentence	36. February
14. twenty	37. Indian	14. thick	37. Jan.
15. village	38. football	15. fifteen	38. grandpa
16. string	39. library	16. probably	39. upstairs
17. quickly	40. vegetables	17. brush	40. principal
18. snake	41. surely	18. parks	41. certainly
19. grades	42. group	19. fast	42. laugh
20. idea	43. sugar	20. form	43. bushes
21. throw	44. laughed	21. loving	44. useful
22. art	45. noise	22. cookies	45. theatre
23. alone		23. ours	
Pupils misspelling more than 3 words begin with level 3.		Pupils misspelling more than 3 words begin with level 4.	

APPENDIX E

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 5			Level 6A		
1. hats	26. scout		1. attic	26. cast	
2. hanging	27. question		2. bang	27. watered	
3. welcome	28. leather		3. sets	28. curly	
4. tents	29. entered		4. rent	29. spoons	
5. insects	30. feathers		5. whip	30. grounds	
6. spots	31. steam		6. including	31. join	
7. lucky	32. needs		7. rod	32. decorations	
8. gay	33. sees		8. ugly	33. service	
9. begins	34. sail		9. maps	34. treated	
10. lighted	35. tooth		10. happiness	35. meal	
11. fourteen	36. shake		11. yell	36. geese	
12. pupil	37. grape		12. desks	37. paints	
13. absent	38. pine		13. listened	38. dates	
14. captured	39. one's		14. ticket	39. chases	
15. seventh	40. etc.		15. fond	40. hide	
16. brick	41. schoolhouse		16. mumps	41. hose	
17. pilgrims	42. articles		17. players	42. September	
18. honor	43. factory		18. traders	43. cardboard	
19. studies	44. remembered		19. refused	44. oatmeal	
20. farming	45. couple		20. hired	45. colonial	
21. canoe	46. route		21. crow	46. disappeared	
22. arrow	47. poems		22. holds	47. gym	
23. sports	48. ought		23. hoe	48. soup	
24. worm	49. eighteen		24. barking	49. greatly	
25. hook			25. aline	50. chocolate	
Pupils misspelling more than 4 words begin with level 5.			Pupils misspelling more than 4 words begin with level 6A.		

APPENDIX F

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 6B		Level 7	
1. blankets	24. attended	1. adopted	19. introduced
2. families	25. pair	2. amusement	20. maple
3. deck	26. form	3. asks	21. mittens
4. wedding	27. boss	4. blown	22. necks
5. pitcher	28. burst	5. bulb	23. operations
6. spinach	29. fountain	6. celery	24. peoples
7. collar	30. lawn	7. colds	25. poured
8. hunters	31. herd	8. composition	26. pudding
9. pal	32. property	9. crawl	27. regards
10. bags	33. teaches	10. den	28. ruined
11. shadow	34. peep	11. directions	29. shirts
12. tennis	35. bait	12. dying	30. splendid
13. limb	36. grave	13. exactly	31. strings
14. midnight	37. shave	14. fats	32. telegraph
15. process	38. rise	15. fog	33. tonsils
16. unknown	39. shouldn't	16. grab	34. voices
17. multiply	40. No.	17. heated	35. within
18. chasing	41. streamline	18. igloo	
19. scenery	42. exercise		
20. pirates	43. information		
21. force	44. medicine		
22. towards	45. successful		
23. chart			
Pupils misspelling more than 3 words begin with level 6B.		Pupils misspelling more than 3 words begin with level 7.	

APPENDIX G

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 8		Level 9	
1. accepted	31. noble	1. accordance	
2. alarm	32. organic	2. adjust	
3. appointed	33. pansies	3. affairs	
4. astonished	34. pear	4. apply	
5. barber	35. quail	5. assume	
6. biscuits	36. rear	6. banquet	
7. breeze	37. request	7. bureau	
8. carpet	38. rotten	8. claim	
9. chin	39. sauce	9. confidence	
10. code	40. series	10. convenience	
11. considerable	41. similar	11. customers	
12. curious	42. source	12. departments	
13. delivered	43. sprang	13. disposition	
14. directly	44. strap	14. enclosing	
15. drug	45. suggest	15. exact	
16. empire	46. tackle	16. extremely	
17. expression	47. terms	17. feels	
18. final	48. trailer	18. gladly	
19. foundation	49. unloaded	19. importance	
20. giraffe	50. wicked	20. informed	
21. grasshopper		21. invoice	
22. happier		22. listed	
23. hopping		23. mighty	
24. improved		24. obtain	
25. intestines		25. owing	
26. kindness		26. personal	
27. lemonade		27. prefer	
28. lodge		28. proof	
29. medium		29. qualities	
30. mop		30. receipt	
		31. relations	
		32. requirements	
		33. satisfactorily	
		34. seriously	
		35. society	
Pupils misspelling more than 4 words begin with level 8.		Pupils misspelling more than 3 words begin with level 9.	

APPENDIX H

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 10	Level 11
1. grammar 2. occasionally 3. discipline 4. familiar 5. argument 6. mischievous 7. adviser 8. eighth 9. parliament 10. succeeds 11. arrangement 12. gratefully 13. perspiration 14. they're 15. appreciate 16. college 17. different 18. fundamental 19. lightning 20. pronunciation 21. particularly 22. there 23. analysis 24. chocolate 25. decision 26. endeavor 27. handsome 28. intimate 29. pamphlet 30. receipt	1. absolutely 2. affectionately 3. appetite 4. awful 5. bookkeeper 6. children 7. concession 8. deceive 9. easily 10. exhibition 11. goddess 12. inconvenience 13. lavatory 14. Negroes 15. peculiar 16. propaganda 17. rheumatism 18. severely 19. statue 20. thief
Pupils misspelling more than 2 words begin with level 10.	Pupils misspelling more than 1 word begin with level 11.

APPENDIX I

DIAGNOSTIC SPELLING PLACEMENT TESTS

Level 12

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. acceptable | 26. incredible |
| 2. adolescent | 27. inquiry |
| 3. alluded | 28. invariably |
| 4. angel | 29. knack |
| 5. arising | 30. lenient |
| 6. attitude | 31. machinery |
| 7. because | 32. martyr |
| 8. breath | 33. mentioned |
| 9. carrying | 34. monstrous |
| 10. civilize | 35. neighbor |
| 11. complementary | 36. obvious |
| 12. congenial | 37. overcrowded |
| 13. continually | 38. penicillin |
| 14. courtesies | 39. picnic |
| 15. derived | 40. precarious |
| 16. dinning | 41. prodigious |
| 17. distribute | 42. prove |
| 18. efficiency | 43. raisin |
| 19. enthusiastic | 44. regular |
| 20. everything | 45. reputation |
| 21. famine | 46. sarsaparilla |
| 22. fourteen | 47. senior |
| 23. getting | 48. soliloquy |
| 24. hardship | 49. superstitious |
| 25. hygienic | 50. tuberculosis |

Pupils misspelling more than 4 words begin with level 12.